

## SNSF Career Tracker Cohorts (CTC)

## Newsletter 2025/2

### Status of the study

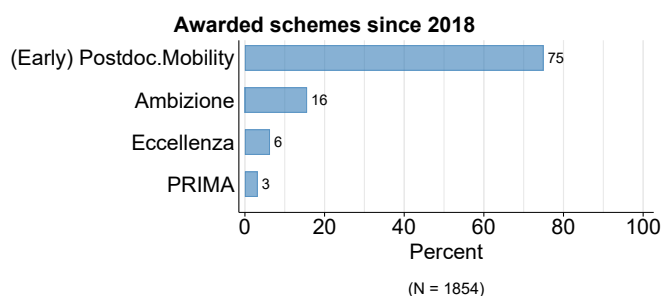
The spring survey round has been successfully completed. A total of 1'217 participants from the four CTC cohorts took part, resulting in a response rate of 46%. We sincerely thank everyone who contributed their time and input – your participation is greatly appreciated!

We are currently preparing the data and accompanying documentation for the release of the full 2024 dataset. In addition, we are developing a new questionnaire module focusing on the diversity of career paths. The new module will be included in the upcoming fall survey.

### SNSF grants of CTC participants

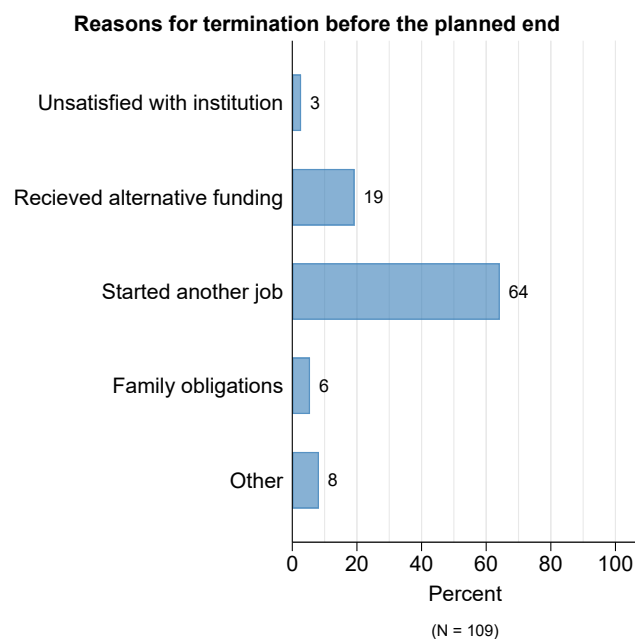
#### Applications observed by the CTC study

Out of 4'744 applications tracked in the originally observed funding schemes (new grants like the SNSF Starting Grant were excluded for this analysis) in the CTC study to date, 1'854 have received funding from the SNSF (39%). The majority of these — namely, 1'390 — were awarded under the Early Postdoc.Mobility and Postdoc.Mobility schemes, followed by 289 Ambizione grants, 116 Eccellenza grants, and 59 PRIMA grants.



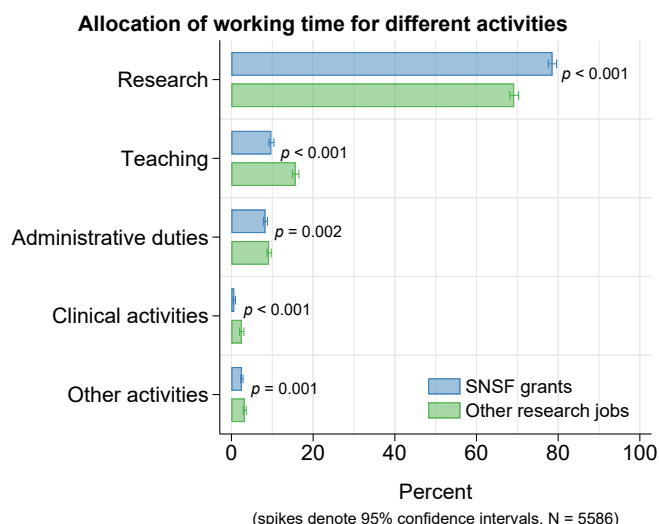
#### Most early terminations are linked to job changes

Given the differing durations of the four funding schemes, it comes as no surprise that the majority of mobility grants have already concluded. Specifically, 73% have been reported as completed (the status of 20% of the grants is unknown due to incomplete survey data). In comparison, only 11% of Ambizione, 3% of Eccellenza, and 7% of PRIMA grants have reached completion at this stage (across all three grants the status of 31% of the grants is unknown due to incomplete survey data). In addition to completed grants, a total of 109 (10%) grants were discontinued before their planned end — for a variety of reasons. In 64% of these 109 cases, researchers accepted new job opportunities and chose not to continue with their grant. Another 19% secured alternative research funding. Premature terminations were also linked to personal and institutional factors: 6% ended early due to family obligations, 3% due to dissatisfaction with the host institution, and 8% for other reasons.



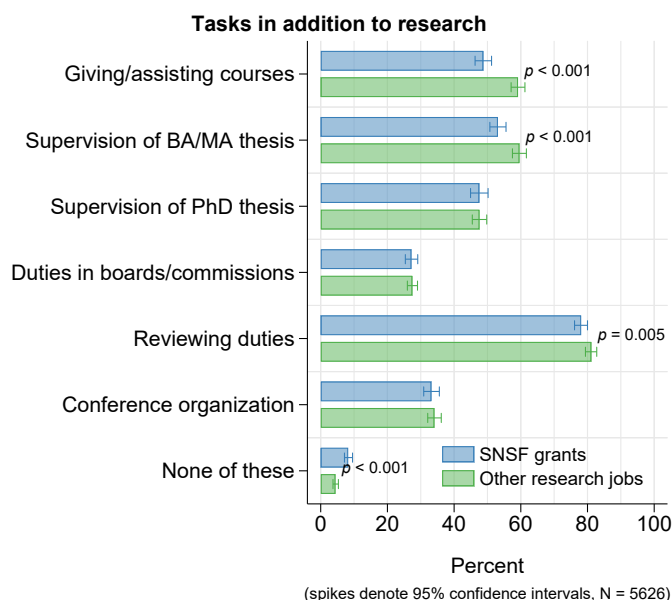
## Grantees spend more time on research and less on teaching

All survey participants engaged in academic research at the time of the survey — whether funded by an SNSF grant, other sources, or research-related employment — were asked how they allocate their total working time across different activities. Clear differences emerged between researchers with and without SNSF grants. Those with SNSF career funding spend significantly more of their time on research activities (79% vs. 69%,  $p < 0.001$ ), while devoting less time to teaching (10% vs. 16%,  $p < 0.001$ ). On average, researchers reported spending about 8.5% of their working time on administrative duties. Clinical activities accounted for 2% overall, with a slightly higher share among researchers without SNSF grants (3% vs. 1%,  $p < 0.001$ ).



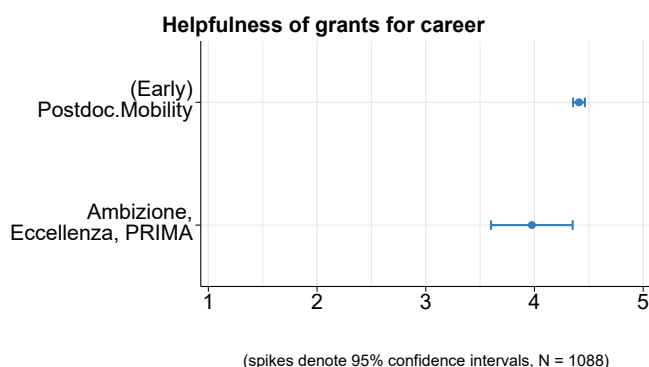
## Fewer side tasks for SNSF grantees

Beyond differences in time allocation for the activities reported above, grantees and non-grantees also differ in the types of tasks they take on in addition to their research work. Researchers without SNSF career funding are more frequently involved in giving or assisting with courses (59% vs. 49%,  $p < 0.001$ ) and supervising bachelor's and master's theses (59% vs. 53%,  $p < 0.001$ ). Both researchers with SNSF grants and researchers with other funding or employment perform an equal number of institutional tasks, including participating in boards and commissions (27%) and organizing conferences (34%). However, when it comes to carrying out peer review tasks, researchers without SNSF career funding perform more than their SNSF-funded colleagues (81% vs. 78%,  $p = 0.005$ ).



## Helpfulness ratings: Mobility grants score higher

Upon completing their grant, researchers are asked to rate how helpful the funding was in advancing their academic career, using a scale from 1 (not helpful at all) to 5 (very helpful). Because only a small number of Ambizione, PRIMA, and Eccellenza grants have concluded so far, responses from these three schemes were combined for this analysis. On average, researchers who completed one of these grants rated their helpfulness at 3.9. In comparison, recipients of Early Postdoc.Mobility and Postdoc.Mobility grants gave higher ratings, with an average score of 4.4.



## Up next

We are already preparing for the upcoming fall surveys. We are also preparing the 2024 survey data for publication. As usual, scientific use files of the CTC study can be accessed at [SWISSUBase](#).

## About

The Career Tracker Cohorts (CTC) project is hosted at the University of Bern and administered by the Interfaculty Centre for Educational Research (ICER) and the Interdisciplinary Centre for Gender Studies (ICFG). The CTC study is being conducted on behalf of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). It is a longitudinal panel study with four cohorts (CTC-18 to CTC-21). It aims to track the career paths of researchers applying for SNSF career funding schemes at the postdoctoral level (Early Postdoc.Mobility, Postdoc.Mobility, Ambizione, Eccellenza, and PRIMA).

For more information, see: <http://careertrackercohorts.ch/>

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